

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

On page 30: Please amend the paragraph at lines 2-14, as follows:

The expression vectors constructed as above, pJFH1, pJFH1/GND, pFGREP-JFH1 and pFGREP-JFH1/GND were digested with restriction enzyme XbaI to prepare template DNAs for the synthesis of the full length HCV genomic RNA and full length HCV replicon RNA. Subsequently 10-20 μ g each of XbaI fragment was treated with 20 U of Mung Bean Nuclease in 50 μ l reaction solution by incubating at 30°C for 30 min. Mung Bean Nuclease is an enzyme which catalyzes a reaction that involves selectively digesting single strand parts of double stranded DNA. Normally, if RNA is synthesized using the above XbaI fragments as it is as templates, replicon RNAs having 4 extra-bases of [[CUGA]] CUAG, which is a part of the XbaI recognition site, at 3' terminus are synthesized. Therefore, in this example, 4 bases of [[CUGA]] CUAG were removed from the XbaI fragments by treating the XbaI fragments with Mung Bean Nuclease. Subsequently, the post-Mung Bean Nuclease treatment solution containing the XbaI fragments was subjected to standard protein removal treatment to obtain purified XbaI fragments without the 4 bases, [[CUGA]] CUAG, as the template DNA to be used below.

On page 30: Please amend the paragraph at lines 19-28, as follows:

After the RNA synthesis, DNase (2U) was added to the reaction mixture and reacted at 37°C for 15 minutes, and then RNA was extracted with acid-phenol treatment to remove the template DNA. RNAs synthesized in this way from the above template DNAs derived from pJFH1, pJFH1/GND, pFGREP-JFH1 and pFGREP-JFH1/GND were referred to as rJFH1, rJFH1/GND, rFGREP-JFH1 and rFGREP-JFH1/GND, respectively. The nucleotide sequences of these RNAs are shown in SEQ ID NO: 12, 13, 14 and 15 for rJFH-1, rFGREP-JFH1, ~~rJFH1/GND and rFGREP JFH1/GND~~ rFGREP-JFH1/GND and rJFH1/GND, respectively. rJFH1 is an example of the full length HCV genomic RNAs of the present invention which has the same sequence structure as the full length HCV genome of JFH-1 strain. rFGREP-JFH1 is an example of the full length HCV replicon RNA of the present invention.